



**For immediate release
July 25, 2008**

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DCR SENDING 20 FIREFIGHTERS TO HELP BATTLE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BLAZES

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will send 20 state and municipal firefighters to northern California tomorrow morning (Saturday, July 26) to help battle the fires that have raged across more than 700,000 acres in that state since late June.

DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. yesterday responded to a request from the National Interagency Coordination Center in Boise, Idaho, for a crew from the Commonwealth. The firefighters will gather in Erving State Forest in Erving Saturday morning, then travel to Harrisburg, Pa., and fly to California from there.

“We are extremely proud of the DCR and municipal firefighters who have been called upon to help the state of California,” said Sullivan. “These are extremely well-trained and dedicated firefighters whose skills are much needed out west, and whose help, we know, is enormously appreciated.”

Massachusetts has been sending firefighters to help other states since 1985. The firefighters in question are federally certified for the work, having passed a 40-hour firefighting class and physical fitness test. All of DCR’s 34 full-time and 53 seasonal firefighters have taken the 40-hour course.

The DCR crew is called a “Type 2 hand crew,” and will engage in direct fire suppression. Crew members will work on the fire line for 14 days, building fire breaks, securing fire perimeters, containing fires, and protecting structures. For the most part, the firefighters will sleep in tents on the ground in fire camps.

The National Interagency Coordination Center is a partnership between the US Forest Service, Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The federal government pays all expenses of the out-of-state crews, including salary, transportation, lodging, and food..

These are the Massachusetts firefighters, and their hometowns, who are going to California:

DCR firefighters:
Robert Bromley, Whitinsville

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
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Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Shawn Bush, Petersham
Michael Currie, Conway
Jonathan Eggleston, Townsend
Christel Kalweit, Marstons Mills
Roy Liard Jr., Millville
Nicholas Neilan, Dartmouth
Millard Ring, Rockport
Christopher Siwik, Fairhaven
Daniel Sovliotis, Salisbury
Mark Teixeira, South Dartmouth
Scott Turner, Three Rivers
Aaron Whiddon, Plymouth
Greg Whittier, Springfield
George Collette, Spencer

Municipal firefighters:

Timothy Batchelor, North Brookfield
Jeffrey Belanger, Deerfield
Duane Cassavant, West Brookfield
John Lightbody, Walpole
Justin Myers, Bridgewater

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.